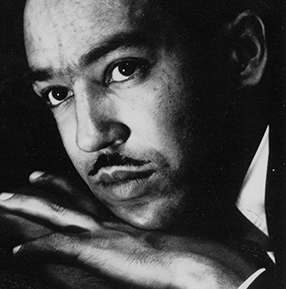
**Harlem Renaissance**

Langston Hughes

The critic Donald B. Gibson noted in the introduction to *Modern Black Poets: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Prentice Hall, 1973) that Hughes “differed from most of his predecessors among black poets . . . in that he addressed his poetry to the people, specifically to black people. During the twenties when most American poets were turning inward, writing obscure and esoteric poetry to an ever decreasing audience of readers, Hughes was turning outward, using language and themes, attitudes and ideas familiar to anyone who had the ability simply to read . . . Until the time of his death, he spread his message humorously—though always seriously—to audiences throughout the country, having read his poetry to more people (possibly) than any other American poet.”

<http://www.biography.com/people/langston-hughes-9346313>

Bessie Smith

Bessie Smith earned the title of “Empress of the Blues” by virtue of her forceful vocal delivery and command of the genre. Her singing displayed a soulfully phrased, boldly delivered and nearly definitive grasp of the blues. In addition, she was an all-around entertainer who danced, acted and performed comedy routines with her touring company. She was the highest-paid black performer of her day and arguably reached a level of success greater than that of any African-American entertainer before her. –

<https://rockhall.com/inductees/bessie-smith/bio/#sthash.rQGreuGs.dpuf>

Louis Armstrong



Louis Armstrong, nicknamed "Satchmo," "Pops" and, later, "Ambassador Satch," was born on August 4, 1901, in Louis Armstrong was a trumpeter, bandleader, singer, soloist, film star and comedian. Considered one of the most influential artists of the jazz age. An all-star virtuoso, he came to prominence in the 1920s, influencing countless musicians with both his daring trumpet style and unique vocals. Armstrong's charismatic stage presence impressed not only the jazz world but all of popular music. He recorded several songs throughout his career, including he is known for songs like "Star Dust," "La Via En Rose" and "***What a Wonderful World.***" Armstrong died at his home in Queens, New York, on July 6, 1971.

<http://www.biography.com/people/louis-armstrong-9188912>

Duke Ellington

An originator of big-band jazz, Duke Ellington was an American composer, pianist and bandleader who composed thousands of scores over his 50-year career.

Duke Ellington was born April 29, 1899, in Washington, D.C. A major figure in the history of jazz music, his career spanned more than half a century, during which time he composed thousands of songs for the stage, screen and contemporary songbook. He created one of the most distinctive ensemble sounds in Western music and continued to play what he called "American Music" until shortly before his death in 1974.

<http://www.biography.com/people/duke-ellington-9286338>